

HB 2079 -- Temporary Governance of the St. Louis City School District

Sponsor: Oxford

This bill changes the laws regarding the structure and conditions for the transitional school district, which has the same boundaries as the City of St. Louis. The transitional district will be subject to all laws governing the metropolitan school district instead of the laws relating to seven-director school districts. The reference to transition from court control after the city schools' federal desegregation case is removed and replaced with a reference to transition from an appointed governing body, commonly known as the special administrative board, to an elected governing body of the school district.

If the St. Louis City School District is declared unaccredited, a chief executive officer nominated by the State Board of Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate must be added to the board of the transitional district within 90 days. Currently, a chief executive officer is nominated by the state board to replace the member that represents the elected board of the district. Provisions regarding the chief executive's salary and powers are removed.

The powers and duties of the special administrative board are revised to include exploration of alternative forms of education rather than alternative forms of governance and the authority to contract with nonprofit corporations and governmental agencies to provide additional services for children enrolled in the district rather than the current authority to contract with nonprofit corporations for the operation of schools.

The bill removes the authority of the governing body of a transitional school district to impose a sales tax at a level not to exceed 85 cents per \$100 assessed valuation and restates the current limitations on tax abatement and tax increment financing. Obsolete provisions regarding the vote on the tax are repealed.

Currently, the transitional school district was to dissolve July 1, 2008, unless the state board determined it was necessary for the district to continue. The dissolution date is changed to July 1, 2013. The bill allows the Governor, as well as the state board, to terminate the district under certain conditions and allows the voters of the transitional district, rather than the state board, to terminate or re-establish the district through a local petition process and a vote of the registered voters in the district. The transitional district must terminate within 30 days after the department determines that the district qualifies

for any other accreditation status other than unaccredited.

As soon as practicable after the effective date of the bill, the school district board must elect one of its members to serve on the transitional school district governing board who will have full voting rights. The board of directors of the city school district will retain auditing and public reporting powers. The governing board of the transitional district will retain \$3 per registered voter in the district for public reporting costs. Members of the elected school board must have unfettered access to all records for auditing purposes. No fees for producing records will apply to any board member, and the records must be produced within seven days of a request. The board of directors of the transitional school district may hold meetings in any district building if at least a seven-day notice is given to the chief executive officer of the transitional school district. The board must have access at no charge to any facility that was previously available to the board.

The bill contains an emergency clause.